CLAIMS:

What I claim as my invention is:

1. A method for assembling and serving food, comprising:

   selecting a plurality of sets of food items;

   assigning a unique identifier to each set of food items;

   displaying each of the food items in an individual food item display container; and

   providing a label associated with each food item display container, each label comprising all unique identifiers associated with each set in which the food item is included.

2. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, wherein each set comprises food items which are compatible with each other.

3. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, further comprising providing a display comprising each of the unique identifiers.

4. A method of serving food according to Claim 3, further comprising providing on the display the names of each food item in each set of food items in association with the unique identifier associated with each set.

5. A method of serving food according to Claim 3, further comprising providing on the display an arbitrary name for each set of food items in association with the unique identifier associated with each set.

6. A method of serving food according to Claim 3, wherein the display comprises a menu board.

7. A method of serving food according to Claim 3, wherein the display comprises a plurality of tags each comprising one of the unique identifiers.

8. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, further comprising attaching each label to a sneeze guard located proximate the food display containers.

9. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, further comprising attaching each label to a food display container.

10. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, further comprising removing portions of food items from each individual food item display container having an associated label comprising one of said unique identifiers.

11. A method of serving food according to Claim 10, further comprising placing the portions of food items removed from each of the individual containers having an associated label comprising one of said unique identifiers in a collection container.

12. A method according to Claim 11, further comprising cooking all the food items contained in the collection container together.

13. A method according to Claim 12, further comprising placing the cooked food items in a serving container.

14. A method according to Claim 13, further comprising serving the cooked food items in the serving container as a meal.

15. A method of serving food according to Claim 11, further comprising providing representations of the unique identifiers for the collection containers.

16. A method of serving food according to Claim 15, wherein the representations are releaseably attachable to the collection containers.

17. A method of serving food according to Claim 16, wherein the representations comprise an adhesive for releasable attachment to a collection container.

18. A method of serving food according to Claim 16, wherein the representations comprise a spring-loaded clamp for releasable attachment to a collection container.

19. A method of serving food according to Claim 15, wherein the representations are permanently attached to the collection containers.

20. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier is a color.

21. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises a alphanumeric characters.

22. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises a Braille symbol.

23. A method of serving food according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises an iconographic symbol.

24. In a restaurant of the type in which a plurality of food items are displayed in individual food display containers and customers assemble meals by selecting portions of food items from the display containers, the improvement comprising:

preselecting a plurality of sets of food items;

assigning a unique identifier to each set of food items; and

providing a label associated with each food item display container, each label comprising all unique identifiers associated with each set in which the food item is included.

25. The method of serving food according to Claim 24, further comprising providing a display comprising each of the unique identifiers.

26. A method of serving food according to Claim 24, further comprising attaching each label to a sneeze guard located proximate the food display containers.

27. A method of serving food according to Claim 24, further comprising attaching each label to a food display container.

28. In a method of serving food according to Claim 24 wherein customers place selected portions of food items in a collection container, the further improvement of providing representations of the unique identifiers for the collection containers.

29. A system for serving food, comprising:

 a plurality of sets of food items;

 a unique identifier associated with each set of food items;

 a plurality of display containers, each containing one of said food items; and

 associated with each display container, a representation of all unique identifiers associated with each set in which the food item in the display container is included.

30. A system for serving food according to Claim 29, wherein each set of food items comprises food items which are compatible with each other.

31. A system for serving food according to Claim 29, further comprising a display containing representations of the unique identifiers.

32. A system for serving food according to Claim 31, wherein the display comprises a list of the names of each food item included in each set associated with the unique identifier associated with the set.

33. A system for serving food according to Claim 29, further comprising a collection container having a representation of one of the unique identifiers.

34. A system for serving food according to Claim 33, wherein the representation is releasably attached to the collection container.